

# Time to Think

*Ticktock, ticktock.* For most kids, the average school day—six and a half hours—is long enough. But in some states, officials want more time on students' side. Kids need more time to learn, they say.

More class time can improve test scores, according to a recent report by the research group Education Sector. As a result, schools are experimenting with tacking on an hour or more to the school day.

Elementary and middle school students at Fletcher-Maynard Academy in Cambridge, Massachusetts, have gone to an eight-hour school day. Fletcher-Maynard Academy is just one of 10 schools in Massachusetts trying out the new schedule. Lawmakers in Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, and Washington, D.C., are also debating extended school hours.

People in favor of longer school days say kids need to learn more to stay competitive in today's world. The additional hours enable teachers to spend more time on each subject. Fletcher-Maynard principal Robin Harris likes having the extra hours. "Teachers can be a little more creative," she told *WR News*.

Students aren't just spending the extra time with their heads in a book, though. Harris explains that her students get longer recesses and more snack time. Parent Dawn Oliver says her 11-year-old daughter, Brittany, is an advice columnist for a magazine at her school in Fall River, Massachusetts. "The kids get so involved in these things because it's not all book work," says Oliver.

Critics argue that extended school days could be too long for today's busy kids. And extra school time might prevent students from exploring other interests. Some students have complained about having to stay later. They are concerned that they wouldn't be able to concentrate during the last classes of the day.

Other people point out that longer school days **interfere** with, or get in the way of, after-school sports and clubs. "The day is long enough already," student Cameron Villers from Ansonia, Connecticut, told *WR News*. "After-school activities would be affected. Nobody wants to be at school from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m." If schools have different schedules, planning athletic games could prove difficult.